

REMARKS

Claims 9-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 9, 16, 18 and 20 are amended. Support for the amendments to claims 9 and 16 can be found at least at paragraphs [0094] and [0095] of the specification. Claims 18 and 20 are amended for form. No new matter is added.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Knable in the March 30, 2010 telephone interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Claims 18 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. By this Amendment, claims 18 and 20 are amended responsive to the rejection. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 9-13 and 16-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yamakawa et al. (EP 0 448 407) in view of Loeffler et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,443,290) and further in view of Blickwedal et al. (WO 00/03867) and Ogawa et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0088529). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yamakawa, Loeffler and Blickwedal, alone or in any permissible combination, do not teach and would not have rendered obvious every claimed feature of independent claims 9 and 16. For example, the above references do not teach and would not have rendered obvious "a carcass band toroidally bulged between said pair of bead cores by radially expanding the displaceable rigid core body," as recited in independent claim 9; and "radially expanding the building drum by radially expanding a displaceable rigid core body to toroidally extend the carcass band between both bead cores," as recited in independent claim 16 (emphasis added).

The Office Action asserts that the bead locks 11 and bead rocks¹ 33 of Ogawa correspond to the claimed bead cores of independent claims 9 and 16 (see page 3 of the Office Action). However, Ogawa merely teaches a carcass band 13 expanding radially while a pair of bead cores 12 converge toward each other (see paragraph [0040] of Ogawa). Importantly, Ogawa specifically teaches that the expansion of the carcass band 13 is conducted by feeding a pressurized gas into the space surrounded by the inner face of the carcass band 13 (see paragraph [0040] of Ogawa). Ogawa does not teach radially expanding the carcass band 13 by radially expanding a displaceable rigid core body, as recited in proposed amended independent claims 9 and 16.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 9 and 16 are patentable over the applied references. Claims 10-13, 18 and 20 variously depend from independent claims 9 and 16. Therefore, claims 10-13, 18 and 20 are patentable for at least their dependency on independent claims 9 and 16, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yamakawa in view of Loeffler, and further in view of Blickwedel, Ogawa, Oku et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,702,912) and Irie (U.S. Patent No. 6,508,640); and claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yamakawa in view of Loeffler, and further in view of Blickwedel, Ogawa, Oku, Irie, and any one of Mitamura (U.S. Patent No. 6,196,819), Irie (JP 08-281655) or Ito (JP 2002-337148). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 14 and 15 each depend from independent claim 9, which is in condition for allowance. Therefore, claims 14 and 15 are patentable for at least their dependency on

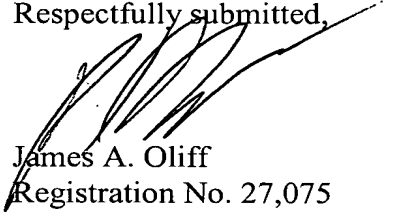
¹ It is believed that the term "bead rocks" is a typographical error and that Ogawa intended to use the term "bead locks."

independent claim 9, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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